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Emmons, William.

Oration and poem delivered July 4, 1826.

Boston.

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1926

AN

ORATION AND POEM

DELIVERED

JULY 4, 1826,

BEING THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF

American Independence.

BY WILLIAM EMMONS.

WITH A FULL LENGTH FIGURE OF THE AUTHOR.

Boston:
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
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ORATION.

Assembled as we are on this glorious morn, while we are greeted from the surrounding hills, by the thundering roar of cannon, which comes sounding joyfully to our ears, reminding us we are convened to pay suitable homage to our Nation's Jubilee. And while we are reminded that fifty years have passed away, we are also called to a fresh recollection of the toils and sufferings of those, our venerated fathers, and are renewedly reminded of the price they paid, that we their posterity may this day boast of our Liberty and Independence.

The revolution of the seasons, together with a return of national festivals, at all times are interesting subjects. Here I would pause to inquire, how long shall we be thought entitled to praise for making honourable mention of those godlike men, who sacrificed in most cases their all; independent of spending their youthful days in camp. I repeat, how long shall we be entitled to praise, for making honourable mention of those who fought the battles of their bleeding country. May it not be laid to our charge, as a nation, that our highly wrought encomiums partake a little of the sounding brass and tinkling symbols. Especially, as we are permiting them, one after the other, to descend to the grave, until nearly all have closed their eyes upon an ungrateful country—and that country purchased by their blood. If I cannot be justified in using the

term ungrateful, I know I shall be justified by saying a long neglectful country! For to what other cause can I attribute this long neglect; when I reflect on the prosperity of the nation. Trusting our National Government will not undertake any new missions or enterprises, such as exploring the new world, as described by Capt. Symmes, until they provide for the few remaining heroes of the Revolution, as we are proud to call them, that it may no longer be said the Revolutionary Soldier is imprisoned for his poverty, as has often been the case within a few years past. I will not press this subject further, as the consideration of it is too painful to dwell upon. For should I attempt to give any thing like a view of the subject, I should fill a bulky volume, and cause this day to be a day of mourning, instead of a day of mirth and rejoicing.

If I should cast my eyes around upon society, and mark out such as laid the broad foundations of fortunes! Yes, immense fortunes! by first crying down the soldiers' money, and then by their agents, buying it up at two and six-pence on the pound, thus preying upon the sufferings of the war worn soldier of the Revolution. Should I attempt this, I should point you to many who have received unmerited applause. Leaving this subject in the hands of the government, permit me to turn your attention to an event which took place after the reduction of Canada, as in all probability it was the prime cause of our becoming a free sovereign and independent people. It is well known to the historian after the reduction of Canada, the British officers

who commanded on that expedition, came to New York and Boston, to visit their brethren as they then called them. On their arrival they flew to meet and welcome them, and they were paraded through the streets, as the saviours of the land; all doors were open to receive them, every day during their stay in Boston was spent in feasting their beloved guests. No pains were spared to make those entertainments as splendid as possible; by aid of kind neighbours, their rooms glittered with borrowed plate; wine of every vintage sparkled in their cups, while the long extended tables, crowded with every luxury of sea and land, was succeeded by the richest deserts. This feasting of the British officers, was the leading cause of our becoming an independent nation, as I will attempt to show. For when those officers returned to England, they could not forget the good fare they received at Boston, and many of them were inclined to pay the Bostonians a second visit, not merely to eat their good dinners, for no sooner had those stall fed officers returned home, than they began to sound abroad the numberless magnificent entertainments in New-York and Boston, more particularly of Boston. Here I would remark they lost nothing of their splendour by crossing the water, for as they represented, brass became silver, and silver became gold. Here I might advise many of the present day to be careful not to make too much display upon every stranger who enters their city or towns, or that may call to dine with them, especially when their houses are adorned with ornaments borrowed or unpaid for, at least I would

remind them it was American hospitality that nearly destroyed their liberty. For from those days of feasting the British ministry began to throw across the waters the eye of envy, and to devise means in order to come in for a share of those represented riches. They even went so far as to propose to the house of Commons to adopt measures that they may more fully and effectually bear a part of our fathers' burdens. did they mean to acknowledge the colonists as free British subjects. entitled to all the privileges of free men.

I say did the ministry of England intend. by bearing a part of our fathers' burdens that they should be entitled to all the privileges as free British subjects. that is if you ever heard of an independent subject of Britain. Or did they intend to allow the colonies a representative in Parliament. who should have a voice in voting money for the common cause—O. no! for Lord North claimed the right to tax and take property at pleasure. As a plea for such unwarranted and despotic measures. he with his creatures begun by boldly trumpeting the wonderful kindness conferred on America. And asserted they first discovered the country. they settled it. It was their blood. their ships. their sailors. their soldiers. and in fact their every thing that had created the colonies: and after having done so much. to be sure we have as good a right to their silver and gold. as a butcher has to the hair of his *Hogs*. when killed.

This language was actually carried into Parliament. when a Mr. Townsend. to enforce the stamp

act, cried out, "Who are these Americans? are they not our children, planted by our care, nourished by our indulgence, protected by our arms?" At this the undaunted Col. Barre, flushed with indignation at the insolent remarks of Townsend, thus thundered forth his powerful artillery: "They planted by your care? No Sir, your oppressions planted them in America, they fled from your tyranny to a then uncultivated and inhospitable country, where they exposed themselves to all the evils which the bloodthirsty savages could threaten, yet actuated by true English love of Liberty, they thought all these evils light when compared with what they had suffered in their own country, and from you who aught to have been their friends. They nourished by your indulgence? No Sir, they grew by your neglect, as soon as you began to indulge them, that boasted indulgence was to send them hungry packs of your own creatures, to spy out their liberties, to misrepresent their actions, and to prey upon their substance. Yes Sir, you sent them men whose behaviour has often caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them; men promoted by you to the highest seats of Justice in that country, who to my knowledge had good cause to dread a Court of Justice in their own! They protected by your arms, no Sir, they have nobly taken up arms in your defence, have exerted a most heroic valour amidst their daily labours, for the defence of your frontier which was drenched in blood, while its interior parts gave up all their savings for our emolument."

These are facts, for our fathers not only planted,

but defended themselves in the French and Indian wars from '35, to '63; it cost them nearly thirty-thousand of their stoutest young men. And by returns it appears Massachusetts alone expended about fifty-thousand pounds sterling, and were ever ready to aid Britain with men and money. But what availeth all this? Lord North's bill to tax the colonies, without their consent was passed and approved by the King. Notwithstanding the weakness of the Americans at that day, when they received the news that the stamp act had passed, they rose up to a man with a determination to resist even unto blood, such as attempted to infringe the liberties of those who nobly threw themselves upon the mighty deep, to be directed by the star of Liberty, to Plymouth's rocky shores, where they with hook and line, supported themselves amidst December's blast in 1620.

As I am this day to be followed by many who have spent a life in acquiring a perfect knowledge of history, and of language; from the GREEK PROFESSOR, to the *Legislator* of 1826. Shall I, an infant compared to them, undertake to lead you through all the winding paths of science, where they have trod since they have left their mothers cradles! No I will not attempt even to lead you through that struggle of our venerable fathers, aided by that noble youth of France, who spurned the mitered crowns of ambitious Kings, and left the adoring object of his affections behind, crossed the foming billows in order to aid the desponding army of WASHINGTON, whose feet were naked, treading the cold snow of heaven; but the heroic LAFAYETTE

arrived bringing his substance to feed the hungry. and cloth the naked soldier! Inspiring them by his noble example to deeds of valour, at Monmouth. Trenton, and Valley Forge, until the glorious fall of York Town, informed them their sufferings were drawing to a close, and that the day was not far distant, when they might sound the glorious word of Independence throughout the land, which had long in darkness laid. Yes, already they beheld the Eagle of injured America, preparing to fly over her long oppressed country, with the olive branch in his beak, holding in his talons the shaggy main of the Lion, who acknowledged their dominions to be free sovereign and Independent.

NATIONAL POEM.

Once more with gladness, the revolving heaven
Hath to our souls, the day of freedom given,
The brightest day, that ever shown on earth,
The day, that Liberty received her birth;
The day, that bade Columbia to be free,
And strike the Anthem of her Jubilee!

Ere this illustrious day, the earth was chill'd
With slaving dogmas, which the affections, kill'd,
Each holy aspiration of the mind,
Panting to reach the height that heaven design'd;
Was, by the wrack, or superstition's breath,
Kindled to vengence—smother'd into death.
An opiate darkness, o'er the world was spread,
And all the finer soul of man was dead.
He hug'd the chains, not daring to be free,
Lash'd with the scourge of iron Monarchy:
Thus slavery chain'd the East—but in the West,
A germ of freedom rooted in the breast—
Yes! here the plant of *Liberty* sprang forth,
While crowns receiv'd the homage of the earth.
It grew, it flourished,—blossom'd in the spring,
Gladening the heart with bounteous harvesting;
While Kings and Priests with jealous leer, beheld,
Intent to scath its beauty from the field.
And when that Albion strove to pluck it forth,
And bend our fathers' bosoms to the earth:
They rose like sparkles kindled to a flame,
And burnt Columbia from Britannia's name!

Who gave the signal word?—
Adams* was first,
Then Henry's eloquence, like thunder burst
And made the Monarch tremble—Hancock, then,
And Jefferson, the first of mortal men;
Stood forth with all the energy of soul,
To prop the weak and animate the whole.
Franklin, the statesman, patriot and the sage,
Rose like the sun to gild a brightning age.
Madison appear'd with wisdom, calm,
Munroe, for Liberty, made bare his arm;
Warren, with virtue glorified his name,
Then, sought his native heaven on wings of flame.
Montgomery follow'd in his bright career,
Pour'd forth his blood and clomb th' eternal sphere;
Mercer and Nash, to sacred Freedom given,
Drain'd their full hearts, and join'd their souls in heaven.
Knox, Lincoln, Sumpter, Clinton, Marion, Scott,
Nor shall the *veteran* Shelby be forgot;
He, who involv'd King's Mountain-Height in flames,
And bore his conquering banner to the Thames.
The hoary Putnam and immortal Greene,
Made bare their sword in many a dubious scene,
The first at Bunker, prov'd his blood in strife,
Pure as the balsam from the tree of life;
Greene, like an Eagle on her summit, brave,
With instruments of death dug deep their grave.
On Gilford's plain, he paraliz'd the throne,
And made the ranks of royalty to groan.
But, at the Eutaw, was his soul put forth,
And struck them backward in their blood to earth.
But who the numbers of their names, can cast,
Spirits of heaven, elect, who, when the blast
Of Freedom's clarion, sounded through the sky,
Rose in their strength to stand for Liberty?
No mortal utterance could the host, recite,
What tongue of dust can sum the stars of night,

* Samuel Adams.

Or count the dew-drop diamonds, that display
The mimick rainbows in the blush of day?
When these are number'd, then, the Muse might deign,
To sum the band; that broke th' oppressor's chain.

Lo! *one*, in solid grandeur is display'd,
For none, his equal of the dust, was made.
The richest elements of earth, compos'd
His mortal fabrick, which sublime, inclos'd
A spirit, bath'd in heaven's pure fount on high,
The hallow'd essence of the deity.
Yea, Earth and Heaven, seem melted into one,
To form the person of a WASHINGTON!

Who can describe the sufferings of our sires,
To give us freedom to our hearts' desires?
Naked—expos'd to Winter's freezing breath,
No homely morsel to redeem from death.
Their unshod feet, the snow, with blood, distain,
While their crampt joints scarce bare them o'er the plain.
Their limbs, chain'd, grip'd, confin'd, in dungeons, damp,
Dripping cold dews, while scarce their vital lamp,
Flickers with life; no tear is seen to flow,
Though steep'd, their hearts, in bitterness of wo;
Yes, in their eye, no passion of despair,
Is seen to cast a dull reflection, there;
But on their brows, a something is display'd,
Which proves their souls are not with death, dismay'd!
Their country's Freedom was the righteous cause,
Which gave them power to smile at tyrant laws!
Their eyes were fix'd on this illustrious day,
To last till nature shall with age decay;
When we, their offspring, would with joy, combine,
And strike their deeds with transport notes, divine.
When virgins would select from freedom's bowers,
With tender hand, the dew enamell'd flowers;
And deck their snowy brows with garlands, fair,
And chanting sing, what once their fathers were:

How they, at Bunker's height, the foe, withstood.
And bath'd the tyrants in a bath of blood.
How they, at Trenton, led by Washington,
Through wintry darkness, the proud victr'y won ;
How they, at Saratoga, sunk the cross,
And sum'd whole armies to the royal loss.
How they, at Monmouth, brought the foe to foil,
How Morgan met and ended Tarlton's spoil ;
How they, at Guilford, made Cornwallis pause,
And how at Eutaw, they maintain'd the cause.
How they through fields of blood pursu'd the work,
And how they conquer'd at immortal York !
This is the song, our virgins will recite,
Till yonder orb is quench'd in final night !

And must we pause—here, end the flowing song,
In venerative silence, lock the tongue ?
No—a proud theme, yet calls the muse to dare,
To launch her wings upon ethereal air ;
And tune her voice to notes sublimely high,
To sing of recent deeds of chivalry,
To live whilst valour shall the bosom warm,
Or earth retain the grandeur of its form.

This foe, the same, our fathers bent in strife,
Strove to enslave us—*free* at bud of life.
Pour'd out th' insulting vial of their wrath,
On every star, that deck'd the vessel's path ;
Urg'd the hell monsters of the savage race,
To stab our infants, smiling in their face !
Too long, these scenes, we suffer'd ; but at length,
To seek redress, we girded on our strength.
Hull, first in glory on the ocean, fought,
And soon to Dacres, his submission, taught ;
Decatur, Bainbridge, in succession, met
The sea-proud foe and brought him to their feet.
Jones, Porter, Biddle, Stewart, Warrington,
Will be remember'd, while life's sand shall run ;
Lawrence, ——— ——— ——— ——— ———

—Alas! his name dissolves the soul away!
Yes, he perform'd the wonder* of the sea.
But to behold him in his robes of gore,
The muse must pause—oppress'd her vital core.

Lawrence! thy name, eternity receives,
And tears shall mourn thee, whilst thy nation lives!

Hark! from the west, what pealing thunders break?
'Tis Perry battling glorious on the Lake!
He breaks their line—he wilts the royal powers,
He'as *met the enemy and they are ours.*
Another battle sounding far remote,
Comes to our ears, like heaven's artillery note?
Lo! 'tis Macdonough in his youthful bloom,
Crowding the Albions in a watery tomb;
While Macomb hurls destruction at Prevost,
And drives him backward with his shatter'd host.

Nor to the navy, is our theme confin'd,
A host of names to live upon the mind,
Crowd in full troops to hear their actions told,
And see the banners of their fame, unfold:
Gaines, Miller, Ripley, Jessup, Jackson, Brown,
Circled with light stand blazon'd in renown;
And Leavensworth, and Stricker, Amstead, Scott,
Names to grow bright till honour is forgot,
And that will happen, when the sun turns pale,
And all the stars, that heighten heaven, shall fail.
Pike was too pure for this corruptive earth,
And angels strove for his celestial birth;
But first, the victr'y to his arm, was given,
And then, they bore him in their joy to heaven!

What youthful bosoms, no strange passions, feel—
To hear the mention of the daring Neale?
While Crayney Island on the sea shall rest,
His name will rouse the spirit of the breast.

* Sinking the Peacock.

Nor him alone; Kentucky's youngest born,
Whose fame, the poet's numbers will adorn.
Yea—while Sandusky stream shall wed the Lake,
His proud achievement will the soul awake;
To strains, enraptur'd when his head turns gray,
His bosom press'd with monumental clay—
Yes, Croghan's name will dwell in future song,
When death's deep silence seals our every tongue.

These youths, beside, shall age with hoary hair,
Be cherish'd in rememberance, sage Adair.
And Shelby, might in the days of old,
In vain, his deeds of valour could be told;
E'en with swift utterance, till the sun has set,
And stars effulgent shine on heaven's high parapet.

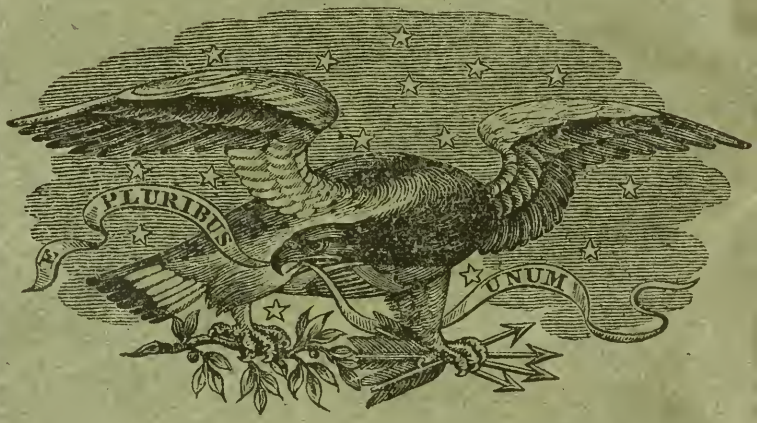
And shall the Muse two other chiefs deny,
To deck their brows with wreath of poesy?
Shall she, their prowess, in her song, forget?
Pride of Kentucky—stars to never set—
The Johnson's, foremost in their country's cause,
The firm supporters of the people's laws;
Two brother Ajax in the field of flame,
The one,* the conquerer the Albion name,
The other† bleeding struck the desperate blow—
Which laid the monarch,‡ of the wild men, low!

The muse must pause; should she her strain prolong,
Her theme would give no silence to her song;
Yon flaming chariot would descend the deep,
Revolve through night and climb the orient steep;
And gild the earth with a returning day,
And yet unfinish'd, her exalted lay.
How would she pour her voice on Queenstown Height,
Describe at Chippewa, the slaughtering fight;
Reveal at York, how Pike maintain'd the charge,

* Col. James Johnson. † Col. R. M. Johnson. ‡ Tecumseth.

And tell how Scott reduc'd the fort of George.
How Amstead at Mac Henry dauntless stood,
Against the burning fury of the flood,
While Stricker met, and fought them on the shore,
And beat them of their hopes of Baltimore.
Scarce can the Muse her ardent thoughts, control,
To sing Niagara with rising soul;
Where Scott and Jessup, Miller, Ripley, Brown,
Through solid fire, tore royal standards down.
These would the Muse describe, and other names,
As how the Johnsons conquer'd at the Thames;
And, to conclude the battles of the west,
How Jackson fought with thunder on his breast!
But time forbids: Yet, ere my numbers cease,
I feel to touch the bosoms made for peace;
War is the element of man—but love,
Descended pure, on woman, from above.
Your virtues bind our hearts in golden chains,
But O, the bondage gives delicious pains!
This earth would be but darkness, without thee,
And savage wrath, our boasted Liberty,
Your love illumin'd charms, our hearts, control,
And give us something sacred to the soul.
Not charms, that wither, like the morning flower,
Expos'd to sun beams in the noontide hour;
Or, clouds, fast fading of their beauties given,
Or the frail tinctures of the bow of heaven.
But charms, that sweetly flourish from the mind,
These, these endure and make the heart refin'd;
O, to your children, teach *this* glorious day,
That time may never wear it to decay,
And, at the altar, with a bended knee,
Make them to swear, they ever will be Free!
Then shall Columbia hail this day on high,
Till a new sun shall gild eternity!

INDEPENDENCE.



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